



## **CAPITOL TIDBITS**

**by Sen. Bob McCaslin**  
**4th Legislative District**

**January 28, 2005**

### **Election Reform Update – New Bills Filed**

**Senate Bill 5400** – This measure requires voters to show proof of registration and photo ID when voting at the polls.

**Senate Bill 5395** – This measure requires that all electronic vote devices produce a machine-countable paper record for each vote cast.

**Senate Bill 5399** – This measure requires county elections officials to randomly investigate the record of all registered voters to make corrections regarding persons who are deceased or whose residence differs from that on the official statewide voter registration list.

**Senate Bill 5499** - This comprehensive measure addresses training for election workers; formal reviews of election-related policies and procedures; voter verification; uniform ballots; the appearance of provisional ballots and penalties for voter fraud.

**Senate Bill 5525** – This measure requires provisional ballots be printed on color paper to distinguish them from regular ballots so they can be retrieved from electronic vote-counting machines should they be put into the machines by accident before the voter's qualifications are verified.

**Senate Bill 5526** – Provisional ballots are required by the federal Help America Vote Act. This measure creates state law on provisional ballots so they can be regulated.

Election reform will continue to be a hotly contested issue this session.

### **Bipartisan measure provides for annual inflation adjustment in law to help senior citizens and persons retired on disability qualify for property tax exemptions**

Washington voters approved an amendment to the Washington State Constitution many years ago to allow the state to help senior citizens stay in their homes by allowing those with low incomes to qualify for property taxes exemptions. The Legislature has adjusted the level of qualifying income many times over the years. **Senate Bill 5361** directs the state Department of Revenue to annually increase that qualifying income level to reflect the increased cost of living.

### **Bill with strong bipartisan sponsorship creates permanent legislative committee on veterans and active duty military issues**

In 2001, a joint legislative committee was created to study issues of concern to veterans, active duty military personnel, National Guard members and reservists and their families in Washington State. **Senate Bill 5221** makes this body permanent in an effort to better serve the needs of men, women and children in Washington's large military community.

### **Senate honors the men and women who serve in the Washington National Guard**

Members of Washington's National Guard are everyday heroes from helping people in natural disasters to

defending the freedom to self-govern in Iraq. In many ways they put their lives on the line to save others. During a touching ceremony in the Senate on January 26, the members of our state's Guard were thanked and honored. A Washington State flag that had been flying over Camp Anaconda, the largest support base in Iraq, will hang in the Senate Chambers until all Washington National Guard members have returned from Iraq.

### **Second Amendment under attack, several gun control bills heard in Senate Judiciary Committee**

Second Amendment supporters flooded one hearing room and spilled into another on January 25 when the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I serve on, heard a series of gun control measures. Among the bills being considered this session are a state version of the expired federal ban on assault weapons; waiting periods and background checks for gun shows; and a re-run of an overwhelmingly defeated initiative imposing criminal penalties for lack of firearms safety. These measures include:

**Senate Bill 5344** – prohibiting firearms in the Legislative Building

**Senate Bill 5593** – banning .50 caliber BMG rifles

**Senate Bill 5343** – requiring background checks and waiting periods for all guns purchased at gun shows

**Senate Bill 5342** – imposing criminal liability on adults who leave firearms accessible to minors (This measure is similar to I-676, requiring trigger locks and gun safety licenses, which was defeated in all 39 Washington counties in 1997.)

**Senate Bill 5475** – banning assault weapons

### **Bill would permit local referendums on land use decisions by Growth Management Act hearings boards**

Many residents in rural areas dislike it when a growth management hearings board overturns land use plans made by county legislative authorities. Currently, citizens have no way to undo a hearings board directive. Under **Senate Bill 5312**, if voters in a county approve a referendum on a growth management measure, then the measure as passed by the county commission or council becomes effective. If voters defeat such a referendum, then the GMA hearings board decision on the measure goes into effect.